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In Memoriam.



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MRS. MARIAMNE FITCH STRANAHAN.

BY

REV. SAMUEL T. SPEAR, D. D.,

PASTOR OF THE SOUTH PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, OF BROOKLYN, N. Y.

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I.

INTRODUCTION.

IN submitting this Memorial-Volume of the late Mrs. MARIAMNE FITCH STRANAHAN, to her relatives and other personal friends, the compiler deems it proper to offer a few introductory remarks.

The contents of the Volume will speak for themselves, in reference alike to their nature, and the sources whence they came. They consist of the Funeral Sermon, preached by her Pastor on the occasion of Mrs. Stranahan's death; an Obituary, appearing in the *New York Evangelist*; Resolutions passed by the Managers of the Graham Institution, located in Brooklyn, of which Institution she had been the First Directress for eight years prior to her decease; an Extract from the Annual

Report of the Session of the South Presbyterian Church of Brooklyn, of which Church she was a member; an Extract from the Annual Report of Mrs. A. R. St. John, Corresponding Secretary of the Graham Institution, presented January 31. 1867; an Extract from the Third and Final Report of the Woman's Relief Association of Brooklyn and Long Island; and several Letters written by distinguished Clergymen, the most of whom reside in Brooklyn, and some of whom, by personal acquaintance and official relations, had enjoyed very good opportunities to know the life and character of the deceased. These Letters were addressed to the compiler in response to a note to these Clergymen, suggesting that he was engaged in gathering the materials of this Volume, and conveying the wish that they would aid him by the expression of their views. As to the character and position of the late Mrs. Stranahan, the estimate in which she was held, and the tender and affectionate memories which still linger around her

useful life, these sources of information conclusively prove that she was indeed a very remarkable woman, highly gifted, and using her gifts for the glory of God and the good of mankind.

This Volume is the fruit of the spontaneous and coincident suggestion of several minds. It seemed highly proper, as they thought, that some tribute in some permanent shape should be paid to the memory of one who had so richly deserved it. The compiler being her Pastor as well as her personal friend, the task of preparing the work naturally fell to him. He has felt honored in the privilege of performing such a duty.

This Volume is not published with a view to sale at all. It is specially designed, as already intimated, for the relatives and other personal friends of the deceased, who will receive it as a gratuity, and retain it in their possession as the memorial of a most excellent woman gone to the skies. Into what-

ever hands it may fall, may the blessing of God go with it, and make it useful to the reader.

To the class of persons who will be the readers and keepers of this Volume, a brief sketch of the deceased will doubtless be welcome. Such a sketch is presented in the following statements :—

Mrs. MARIAMNE FITCH STRANAHAN was born March 7th, 1813, in the town of Westmoreland, Oneida County, New York. Her father's name was Ebenezer Root Fitch, who was born September 26th, 1772, in the town of Coventry, Tolland County, Connecticut, and who died August 19th, 1820, being forty-eight years of age at the time of his death. Her mother's name was Sarah Dow Fitch, who was born in 1776, and who died March 7th, 1842, being in her sixty-sixth year at the time of her decease. Both of her parents were members of the Christian Church, and died in the faith of the Gospel. The Fitch

family in Connecticut held a good position in society, and was indeed somewhat noted in the State, some of the members thereof holding offices of public honor and trust. Mr. Ebenezer Root Fitch, the father of Mrs. Stranahan, was a descendant, in the fourth generation, from the Rev. James Fitch, who was born in Bocking, England, 1622, who came to this country in 1638, and who was also the first Pastor of the Church of Saybrook, Connecticut. The second wife of Rev. James Fitch, and maternal ancestor of Ebenezer Root Fitch, was Priscilla Mason, the daughter of Major John Mason, deputy and acting Governor of the Colony of Connecticut for eight years, and the conqueror of the Pequot Indians. The mother of Ebenezer Root Fitch was the niece and ward of Chief-Justice Jesse Root, of Connecticut.

In 1837, when she was twenty-four years of age, the deceased was married to Mr. James S. T. Stranahan, who at the time of the marriage

was a manufacturer and merchant in the town of Florence, Oneida County, New York, and who was born April 25th, 1808. Two children survive her, both of whom were born in the city of Newark, New Jersey.

The educational opportunities of Mrs. Stranahan, in early life, were such as could be supplied by the Common School, and Academies for Young Ladies as conducted at that time. She received what was, at that period, deemed a solid and thorough female education. It embraced a practical and useful discipline, and made her an accurate English scholar. The correctness of her deportment in childhood, and the general style of her mind in youth, gave ample promise of the future woman. Her remarkably even temper, industrious and active habits, fondness for useful knowledge, and compactness of mind, suggested a future character of very much more than common power. What she said and did, or what she refrained from saying

or doing, was rarely lost upon the minds of her companions. The *religious* tendencies of her mind and heart date from her early youth. Though she did not connect herself with the Christian Church till a much later period, still she was conscientious in the discharge of religious duties, fond of reading the Bible and other religious books, a regular attendant upon the public worship of God, and was indeed deemed a Christian by those who knew her best, long before she ventured to cherish the hope for herself. A profound sense of the sacredness of religion, combined with a tendency to a strong degree of self-questioning and self-suspicion, led her for many years to doubt whether she was in a proper state of mind to become a member of the visible Church; and when, in later years, she finally concluded to take this step, it was not done without the most careful self-examination. Her early thoughts on the subject of religion, like her more mature ones, were

solid and practical. She was never a doubter, and never a cavalier with the Word of God. Her difficulties were not with the truth as revealed in the Bible, but wholly with herself.

Passing up into womanhood with these general features of mind and character, the deceased, after her marriage, resided three years in Florence, Oneida County, New York. In 1840 the family removed to the City of Newark, New Jersey, where the two children surviving her, were born; and in February, 1845, she commenced her residence in the City of Brooklyn, where she continued to reside until the time of her death, making a residence in this City of a little more than twenty-one years. Soon after coming to Brooklyn she became a member of the Congregation known as "The South Presbyterian Church of Brooklyn;" and in 1855 she connected herself with the Church by a public profession of her faith, her husband uniting with her at the same time. In 1851 she

made, with her husband, a visit to Europe, traveling through the principal countries of Europe. Her husband was elected by one of the Congressional Districts in Kings County as a Representative in the Thirty-fourth Congress; and with him the deceased spent most of the time during the sessions of this Congress in the city of Washington. Here she was brought in contact with Washington society; and here both her intelligence and excellent traits of personal character secured for her many lasting friends.

The Letters contained in subsequent parts of this Volume, refer with special emphasis to Mrs. Stranahan's services, as the President of "The Woman's Relief Association of Brooklyn and Long Island." This Association was organized November 23d, 1862, at which time Mrs. Stranahan was chosen as its President, Miss Waterbury as its Secretary, and twelve other ladies of high standing and patriotic impulses as an Executive Committee. There

was a deeply felt want which this Association undertook to meet. The efforts previously made in behalf of the soldiers, in the City of Brooklyn, were scattered and inefficient, and did not at all express the patriotism or develop the strength of the people. Various organizations were trying to do something for the soldier; and though perfectly united in object, they were nevertheless acting without concentration, and without the certainties of a methodical and orderly plan of effort. It was especially true, that the strength of the Christian Church was not adequately called into service. The feeling was good; but the plan was wanting. This state of feeling, without any sufficient mode for its practical expression, led to the formation of "The Woman's Relief Association," as an auxiliary to the United States Sanitary Commission. The War Fund Committee, already established in the City of Brooklyn, called the Clergy of the City together for the consideration of the subject.

This meeting of Clergymen was largely attended; and after a thorough comparison of views, it was decided to hold a public meeting in the Academy of Music, and also to invite the Rev. Dr. Bellows, President of the United States Sanitary Commission, to be present, and give a detailed statement of his views in regard to the wants of the soldier, and the best method of co-operating with the Government in meeting them. The Academy of Music was crowded to its utmost capacity on the occasion referred to; and after hearing fully from Dr. Bellows and other Clergymen present, the audience resolved to invite the ladies of Brooklyn to meet by delegates from the different Churches in the Lecture Room of the Church of the Pilgrims. Such a meeting was held at the time designated; and here "The Woman's Relief Association" was formally organized. Such, briefly, is the history of its origin.

The history of the *work* accomplished by

this Association, during the progress of the late civil war, is worthy of all praise. It places Brooklyn in the very first rank of patriotic Cities. It was largely, though not exclusively, a *Church-work*, drawing its chief life and support from the Churches of Brooklyn and Long Island, and being most heartily sustained by the Clergy. Some eighty Churches of different denominations were united in the effort; and these Churches were held together and co-operated in perfect harmony till the occasion ceased for their labors. Mrs. Stranahan, in her final report, says: "The aggregate of our efforts, including the results of our Great Fair, represents a money-value of not less than half a million of dollars." Three hundred thousand dollars of this sum were paid into the treasury of the United States Sanitary Commission in cash; and hospital supplies were furnished to the amount of over two hundred thousand dollars more, embracing the various things needed for the

comfort of the sick or wounded soldier. The Great Fair of Brooklyn had its origin in "The Woman's Relief Association." At first it was proposed to unite the efforts of Brooklyn with the Metropolitan Fair to be held in New York; but on reflection it was thought that a much larger result would be gained by an independent effort on the part of Brooklyn and Long Island, and the result fully justified the opinion. "The Woman's Relief Association," from first to last, was a great and glorious success, not equaled by any other like association in the country.

It is due to truth, and due to the memory of the deceased, to say that this success depended very largely upon her wisdom and her efforts. She was the right woman in the right place. She gave her time to the work with a zeal and perseverance that never faltered, and with a hopefulness for her country that yielded to no discouragement or despondency. As a presiding officer, she discharged

her duties with a self-possession, courtesy, skill, and method, that commanded universal admiration. She had a quick and judicious insight into the various ways and means by which the meetings of the Association would be rendered interesting and attractive. The business part of the work was constantly under her eye. No woman ever labored in a sphere more honorable; and but few women could have filled her place. Her general temper of mind, her large and catholic views as a Christian, and then her excellent discretion, eminently fitted her to combine all the Churches in one harmonious and patriotic effort. This was her constant study; and well did she succeed. As an evidence of the sentiments with which she had inspired her associates, the following resolution offered at the last meeting of the Association, and unanimously adopted, will speak for itself:—

Resolved, That the thanks of the Woman's Relief Association are pre-eminently due to our President, Mrs. J. S. T. STRANA-

NAX, for the singular ability, wisdom, and patience with which she has discharged the duties of her office, at all times arduous, and not unfrequently requiring sacrifices to which nothing short of the deepest love of country could have been equal. It is due to justice, and to the feelings of our hearts, to say that the usefulness, the harmony, and the continued existence of the Woman's Relief Association, through the long and painful struggle, now happily ended, have been in a large measure owing to the combination of rare gifts, which have been so conspicuous to us all in the guidance of our public meetings, and which have marked not less the more unnoticed, but equally essential, superintendence of the work in private.

The Letter of the Rev. Dr. Bellows, who was the President of the United States' Sanitary Commission, and who as such was brought into official relations to Mrs. Stranahan, shows in what estimate he held her services, and what were the impressions made upon his mind as to her mental and moral character. This Letter contains a very truthful picture of the facts and the person.

For eight successive years prior to her death, Mrs. Stranahan had been the First Directress of the Graham Institute, a noble charity founded for the relief of "Respect-

able, Aged, and Indigent Females;" and during the whole existence of this Institution, she was one of its important supporters. As a human being, and as a Christian woman, she tenderly sympathized with the poor and the needy, and was ever ready to extend to them the helping hand. She knew how to do it with a grace and familiar simplicity, that always made charity from her hands doubly welcome. The resolutions passed by the Managers of this Institution upon the occasion of her death, and which may be found in this Volume, as also the Letter of the Rev. Dr. Farley, fully show what were her relations to this Institution.

The compiler of this Volume was for twenty years her Pastor, and had the opportunity of forming a very reliable opinion of her as a woman, and also as to her religious character. This opinion he has expressed in the Sermon preached on the occasion of her death; and to this expression, without here

repeating the same, the reader is respectfully referred. In addition to that statement, the compiler desires here to say, what could not so well be said on that occasion, that it was not uncommon for him to converse fully and frequently with her on subjects affecting the political and general interests of the country, especially during the late war, and afterward in relation to the proper settlement of the questions growing out of the war. On these subjects she was a woman of very clear and positive opinions, very much more intelligent and better informed than most of her sex. She was a true patriot; and during the war she held fast to the doctrine, that the Government must conquer the Rebellion at all hazards and all costs. She was the earnest admirer and devoted friend of the lamented Lincoln. After the close of the war and the death of Mr. Lincoln, she detected, at a very early period, the unhappy drifting of events as the fruit of what seemed to her a very

serious mistake in the Executive policy of the Government. She knew the Southern people, having at different times mingled with them; yet her views on political questions accorded well with her Northern birth and education. Without being fanatical in her impulses, she nevertheless hated slavery with an intense aversion. The entire sympathies of her moral nature were on the side of freedom. The earnest prayer of her heart, in respect to the issues of the Rebellion, was that treason might be stamped with its deserved odium, and that the rights of the Freedmen might be thoroughly protected.

In concluding these introductory observations, the compiler takes pleasure in expressing his thanks to those clerical gentlemen who have kindly furnished him the Letters, which appear under the head of Correspondence. As he doubts not, they will be gladly accepted and read by the relatives and personal friends of the deceased, as a just tribute

to her memory. To these relatives and personal friends he offers this Volume as a MEMORIAL-VOLUME—in so doing, acting as the selected representative of the Hon. James S. T. Stranahan, the husband upon whom the death of his wife fell as the severest affliction of his life.

SAMUEL T. SPEAR.

II.

FUNERAL SERMON,

BY REV. SAMUEL T. SPEAR, D. D.

"FOR WE KNOW, THAT IF OUR EARTHLY HOUSE OF THIS TABERNACLE WERE DISSOLVED, WE HAVE A BUILDING OF GOD, AN HOUSE NOT MADE WITH HANDS, ETERNAL IN THE HEAVENS."—2 *Cor.* v. 1.

I HAVE selected this passage as being specially appropriate for the service, which has been announced for this hour. Some four weeks since, away from her home, and from the society of those with whom she had been accustomed to mingle, Mrs. Mariamne F. Stranahan, a much beloved member of this Church, was called to meet her God. Under

the circumstances as then existing, it was not practicable, at that time, to hold a funeral service in this City; and hence it was thought expedient to defer the service till the family could return, and thus give the community an opportunity to share with them in the mournful solemnity. That moment has now arrived; and I am before this audience with the text and the occasion for my theme.

Calling your attention briefly to the words of the TEXT, I shall ask you to take note of three points.

THE FIRST IS THE POSITIVENESS OF THE APOSTLE'S ASSERTION.—Whatever the assertion means, of that he was positive. It was not a matter of probable conjecture mingled with doubt, but of strong and unhesitating assurance. “For we *know*.” The *ground* of this knowledge, as we suppose, was not fixed in any superior natural endowments of the Apostle; it did not rest upon any scientific

processes of thought; but it did spring from the absolute truth of God as given to man by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost. This, we take it, was the secret and source of Paul's positive knowledge. He had a complete faith in the Gospel of the Son of God, and in all the principles and truths revealed by that Gospel. Whatever it declared, that he accepted as true, upon the authority of God. He was himself an inspired man, specially intrusted with this Gospel, and could hence speak and write with absolute positiveness of knowledge.

This, let me assure you, is a much higher ground than that of unaided reason, especially in matters pertaining to the after-life. Of many earthly things we may be perfectly confident; but when we come to things spiritual and immortal, future and invisible, in respect to which we have no experience, we want a revelation to guide

us, to give us the objects of faith, and support that faith by the unfailing testimony of God himself. The profound reasoner feels this necessity very much more than the man of careless and superficial thought; and hence having satisfied himself that the Bible is the Word of God, and that the Gospel of Jesus Christ is the Truth of God, he rests upon this Word and this Gospel with the simplicity, docility, and unwavering confidence of a child, having in his own happy experience that faith which is the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen. He walks by faith, and not by sight.

THE SECOND POINT TO WHICH I ASK YOUR ATTENTION, IS THE SUPPOSITION WHICH THE APOSTLE MAKES.—This is contained in the following words: “If our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved.” By “our earthly house of this tabernacle” he evidently means the human body. It is our “house,”

because it is our dwelling-place, for the present the instrument and the abode of spiritual life. It is also "earthly," because reared upon the earth, being terrestrial alike in its locality and its structure. It is also a "tabernacle," since it is not the *permanent* dwelling-place of the essential man, but merely the convenience of the passing moment, like all other tabernacles suitable to a pilgrim and a traveler, yet not fitted to be his final home. Death is the event which involves the dissolution of this tabernacle. The powers of animal life are then suspended; the body becomes worthless, considered as a spiritual residence; we pay to it our tribute of affection and honor, and then lay it away to moulder in the grave. There it lies, just where we place it, unconscious of the darkness and solitude of its lonely home, unpained by its own decay. The laws of nature seize upon it; and soon it is a body no longer. We may visit the

spot where we laid it; the costly marble may tell the passer-by, on whom, and when, and where the fatal blow descended; yet these tributes of human feeling have no power to rescue us from that common fate which so surely awaits us all. "Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return." Think we or think we not, the appointment is sure. Nothing can reverse it, and nothing delay the final hour. With every beating pulse it approaches; and soon its prodigious experience must be ours. We may banish the subject from meditation; but this does not alter the fact. In due season, the event referred to by the Apostle, will overtake us all.

"Like crowded forest trees we stand,
And some are marked to fall;
The axe will smite at God's command,
And soon shall smite us all."

It is, moreover, good for us to pause and meditate upon this fact. It is a seri-

ous error to think all men mortal but ourselves. Meditation, truthful and frequently repeated, will be conducive to our moral health. The questions which it raises, and for which it seeks a solution, form the greatest themes of thought. It conducts us to the silent, solemn shore of that vast ocean we must sail so soon, bidding us with earnest gaze to lift our contemplations to the amazing problems of the mighty future. That man surely has no discretion, who studiously ignores his own mortality. If of this he is afraid to think, then he is at once the greatest of cowards and the greatest of heroes—timid where he ought to have courage, and bold where he ought to be timid. He will certainly live as the fool liveth, and then die as the fool dieth. The fatal hour, like a thief in the night, will come upon him, and find him quite unprepared to meet it. His dreams of pleasure will be exploded; and naught be left but the pangs and curses of

a wasted and mis-spent life. Let us all so meditate our end as seasonably to prepare for it. That life is long which answers life's great end. That life is wisest which one is equally fitted to resign or retain.

THE THIRD POINT IN THIS TEXT IS THE POSITIVE ASSERTION WHICH IT MAKES.—“If our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, *we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.*” At a glance you see that the man himself, in the essential elements of his mental and moral humanity, is supposed to survive the dissolution of his mortal body. The body, the house, the tabernacle, falls; but the personal man does not fall with it. His spiritual nature is not dissolved. His reason, his conscience, his moral affections, his character—these are not destroyed or even suspended by the event, which has proved so fatal to the body. There is something in the man which the hand of death does

not reach; and that something, while now entirely distinct from the body, yea, giving to this body of flesh and blood all its significance and value, outlives the decay and dissolution of our material frame. It does not die with it, and does not moulder with it in the tomb. Blessed thought! Responsive to the universal instinct and hope of the race! Sad, immeasurably and inconsolably sad, would death be, were we denied the comforts and sweet inspirations of this thought. Were there a serious doubt upon the question, that doubt would shade and distress us all the days of our pilgrimage. Yes, blessed thought! And blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath in the Gospel of his Son brought life and immortality to light. That which in some respects looks so much like destruction, is but a process of life—a second birth, by a stated order of God, carrying the soul into a new and more extended sphere and

career of being. They are not dead that die, but living.

“Why then their loss deplore, that are not lost?
Why wanders wretched Thought their tombs around
In infidel distress? Are angels there?
Slumbers, raked up in dust, ethereal fire?
They live! They greatly live a life on earth
Unkindled, unconceived, and from an eye
Of tenderness let heavenly pity fall
On me, more justly numbered with the dead.”

There is more than simple immortality in the words of the text. Grand as the thought may be, it is but the prologue of things grander than itself. “A building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens”—this language, borrowed from earth, and addressed to the children of earth, is designed to assure the Christian that the circumstances of his after-life shall contain the most perfect provision for his future and eternal good. True, he leaves earth behind him, and true also that he leaves the body of earth behind him; yet

he shall have a *home*, a structure or dwelling-place, reared by God himself, and hence an house not made with hands; and this home shall be eternal in the heavens. He will not be a denizen of the spirit-world without a country that he may call his own, or circumstances personal to himself and suited to his everlasting happiness. He will not be a spirit unclothed, or without its robe of light. God will make the amplest provision for him, giving him a place in which to dwell, songs to sing, pleasures to enjoy, and duties to perform. He will be more at home in heaven than he ever was on earth. Here he was a pilgrim and a stranger, dwelling in a tabernacle; but there he shall reside in the palace of his God, in an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. Reaching that royal abode, he will sing with triumph, "Home at last!"

I do not know that I feel any special desire to press these words for a more

accurate, what some would call a more analytic and philosophical, meaning, than the one which lies upon their surface. I think we sometimes err in an effort to be wise above our measure. The Scriptures are written in plain language: they do not attempt to gratify our speculative curiosity; and the better way for us is to take the general impression which they seek to make, and be content with it. I am very far from knowing what are the processes, the modes and circumstances of the future life: I am not as familiar with that life as I am with the scenes of earth: I do not know that I can tell all that is meant by the words of the text; perhaps my conjectures were I to indulge in them, would be very far from the truth: yet this I know, that such language, such a description of the life to come, like hundreds of other descriptions found in the Bible, conveys to earth the intelligence of a good and happy

state after death ; and this is just what we want to know. This is just what the Bible, sometimes by bold and graphic figure, and sometimes in more literal terms, is constantly rehearsing in our ears, using the utmost power of language to make eternity attractive and welcome to the pious sons of earth. In our Father's house there are many mansions : and thither Jesus has gone to prepare a place for us. The righteous shall shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. They shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and as the stars, for ever and ever. Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord, since they rest from their labors, and their works do follow them. An inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, is reserved in heaven for them. A far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory is to be the rich bequest of God in their behalf. Songs of praises shall be on their tongues, and palms of victory in their

hands. Their treasure is laid up where moth and rust do not corrupt, and where thieves do not break through or steal.

These and such forms of statement, so familiar to the reader of the Bible, like that of the text, are not designed to antedate that knowledge of observation and experience which we must die to gain; but they are designed to impress every man with that great and good reward which God has promised to the children of his grace. Happy will it be for us if we take the broad impression. It is quite enough for our present circumstances. It is indeed all that we are now competent to take. Remember that eye hath not seen, and ear hath not heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man fully to conceive, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. It doth not yet appear what they shall be. Content yourselves then with the direct and obvious idea of the Scriptures, and learn to

say with the Apostle, "For we know, that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." When standing on the other side, you will know what this means, as you cannot while standing here. Be sure so to live that you can without presumption appropriate the language. Obey God; receive his Gospel; and then proceed to the grave with the fullest hope of a blessed and happy immortality.

Having thus developed the thoughts of the text, I now turn in a few closing remarks to the occasion, which is providentially a part of my theme this morning. In these remarks I shall not say a word which I do not believe to be true.

The deceased, Mrs. Marianne Fitch Stranahan, dying at the age of fifty-three years, was born of pious parents in the town of Westmoreland, Oneida County, State of New

York. In early life she was well educated in the common English branches, excelling in English Grammar and Rhetoric. Previously to her death, she had been a resident of this city for nearly a quarter of a century. During nearly the whole of this period, I have sustained towards her the relation of a Christian Pastor. In the year 1855 she became a member of this Church, joining it in connection with her husband upon a public profession of her faith.

My first acquaintance with the deceased was made in the sick-room. I then met her as an invalid and a stranger. This interview was mainly devoted to the subject of religion—a theme which I found entirely welcome to her feelings, and upon which she had evidently meditated for years. I saw at once her profound respect for the theme, her knowledge of the Bible, and her entire faith in the book as of divine authority. She then expressed to me all the con-

victions and all the essential affections and mental habits of the Christian character, and simply failed, so far as I could judge by her words, in realizing to herself her own position, with its privileges as guaranteed to her by the truth of God. She was timid, self-suspicious, and doubtful on the question of her right to the Christian hope. I retain to this day the impression then made upon my mind, and which, in conversation with an intimate friend, I thus expressed: "Either Mrs. Stranahan is a Christian, or she soon will be. I think she is a Christian without knowing it." This mood of mind delayed her profession of religion for some ten years; she was waiting for more satisfactory evidence of the work of grace in her heart; and at length, after repeated conversations on the point, after much hesitation and earnest self-examination, and with no little trembling of soul, she finally decided to connect herself with the visible Church. My judgment is

that she was spiritually prepared for this act long before she performed it; yet the propriety of the step was not so evident to herself, and hence her delay.

As to the character of the deceased considered in the strictly *Christian* aspect, it is perhaps enough to say that it was thoroughly Christian. She certainly was an *intelligent* Christian, well instructed and well read in the doctrines of the Gospel. She was a *reliable* Christian, firm, equable, uniform, and fixed in her principles, conscientious in the performance of that which she deemed to be right, and equally in the resistance of that which she viewed as wrong, without those moods and eccentricities of character which sometimes mar the beauty of grace. She was a *practical* Christian, embodying the moral sentiments of her inner life in the concrete forms of living action. She was large-hearted and comprehensive in the scope of her piety, being eminently free from the bigotry and

sectarian prejudices, which too often dishonor the Christian name. She had great confidence in the truth of God, and thoroughly believed in the visible Church as the divinely appointed agent of spiritual doctrine and practical philanthropy in this fallen world. She was not given to idle speculation or useless sentimentality. Religion with her was a life to be lived, and a truth to be illustrated. Of her merely emotional experiences she seldom spake; and yet she was always frank, free, and facile in religious conversation, showing her relish for the theme. Though holding the faith of the Church to which she belonged, and attached to its forms of worship, she was, nevertheless, by nature as well as by grace, exceedingly liberal in both feeling and practice toward all the other branches of the Christian family; and this quality of character eminently fitted her to act well her part in some of the positions to which she was providentially called.

The elements of *natural* and *acquired* character possessed by the deceased, were adapted to make her a woman of more than ordinary importance and power in any and every circle of life. A large endowment of excellent sense prepared her to be a truly wise woman. Hers was a sense that served her on all occasions, and under all circumstances, and made her quite equal to every thing which she undertook. Hasty and inconsiderate words seldom fell from her lips. She was a good judge of things, knowing what to do and how to do it. Always genial and sometimes playful in her feelings, simple and unpretending in her manners, perfectly sincere and genuine in her friendships, she was fitted to enjoy life and minister enjoyment to others. The lowly and humble found her a lady in the truest sense, and the most exalted were impressed by her presence and conversation. Her culture derived from reading, travel, observation, and a large acquaintance with others, rather

than from the mere forms and routine of school-discipline, secured to her a self-reliance, a self-possession, and practical wisdom equal to all the emergencies and occasions of life. Though not pretentious, and far from seeking to ape the brilliant woman, she nevertheless had such a combination of mental and moral qualities, that she was eminently a talented woman, fully competent to speak, write, or act so as strongly to impress others. Life she regarded as a moral gift, to be used for the glory of God and the good of mankind, rather than as a day to be whiled away in fashionable parade, or devoted to personal enjoyment. She was hence *laborious*, willing to work both mind and body for the attainment of ends which she deemed desirable. Toward the poor and needy she was kind and charitable; and by all the tendencies of her nature as well as the principles of her Christian character, she was the friend of the outraged and oppressed. Never gifted with great power

of physical endurance, and often for long periods the subject of painful illness, she had been disciplined to patience, resignation, and submission in the school of much suffering.

The *official* positions appropriate to her sex, which sought the services of the deceased, furnished an opportunity to bring into effective action many of the qualities of mind and heart to which I have referred. For several years prior to her decease she had been the First Directress of an Institution established in this City to provide for the comfort of aged and indigent females; and to the interests of that noble charity she devoted her time and effort, with the zeal of a true philanthropist. Her official associates, as I doubt not, feel that by her death they have lost a wise counselor and a most valuable co-operator.

The Woman's Relief Association, organized in this City during the progress of the late war to co-operate with the United States

Sanitary Commission, selected the deceased as its ^{*}presiding officer; and here it was, especially, that the public had an ample opportunity to observe her character. Here were the severest and most important public labors of her life. This Association undertook to centralize and combine all the agencies of Brooklyn and Long Island in one general and methodical system of action for the sanitary comfort of those noble men, who had gone forth to fight the battles of their country. The eminent success of this Association, its large contributions to the Army and the Navy, the Great Fair which it inaugurated, the patriotic spirit by which it was marked, its harmony of counsel, and untiring steadiness of purpose, while reflecting the highest credit upon the women of Brooklyn and Long Island, show most conclusively that its Presidency and general management had fallen into wise and efficient hands. Those who were present at its various meetings, some of

which were very large, will recall the grace, the ease, the self-possession, the propriety, the correctness, and order, with which the deceased always presided, in this respect evincing an ability and skill not always equalled by the other sex. Those more familiar with the details of the effort, will remember how steadily and earnestly, and with what sacrifice of time and strength, she devoted her whole heart to the service. She was so situated that she could spare the time; and she had the heart to do it. Perhaps she overtaxed her physical powers. If so, it was a willing offering to her country. The Woman's Relief Association will live on the page of history, as a noble tribute to the patriotism, the energy, and executive skill of a true woman. At her invitation, I had the honor to address the Association on several public occasions; and I always felt that, whatever might be true of the *men*, however much they might be divided about questions

incident to the war, I was speaking to an assembly of genuine patriots, who expected to win in the pending struggle, and who meant never to pause in the effort till the flag of the nation floated in absolute triumph. A more loyal set of beings never trod the earth. The country owes much to her women; and nobler patriots than those engaged in the Woman's Relief Association, no country ever had. I am a personal witness to the fact, as are many who hear me, that the deceased gave to her country's cause the very best offerings in her power. She saw the greatness of the crisis, and labored accordingly. In the last interview I ever had with her—little did I then suppose it to be the last—she spoke some earnest and honest words in respect to the affairs of the country, expressing thoughts which subsequent developments prove to have been true.

The domestic relations and character of the deceased belong specially to that circle of

weepers and friends, who knew her best, and to whose hearts her death has brought the desolate feelings of real sorrow. My words of comfort and consolation are but poor substitutes for her presence. The kindest feelings which humanity can lay upon the altar of another's sorrow, utterly fail to meet the wants of an afflicted heart in such a terrible crisis of experience. God himself only is adequate to the occasion. Yet let those friends know that many deeply sympathize with them in this heavy trial. No woman could have died in this City, whose death would have awakened more universal regret. While the husband, the son, the daughter, the sister, and other near and dear relatives, feel that they have lost a most cherished object, the people of Brooklyn also feel that a woman of great merit and eminent usefulness has been called to her final account. Her name will not be speedily forgotten.

I was not present at the death-scene. An

excellent woman of this City, and an intimate friend, who was present, in a note to me, has characterized that scene, in these words:—
“ She gave up her spirit with no selfish regret, but calmly, peacefully, even smilingly, as she walked through the dark valley of the shadow of death.” Her life had prepared her for such a death, come when, or where, or in what form it might. She accepted the appointment as of God, and committed her soul to the covenants of His unfailing Word. Could she have chosen the *place*, she would doubtless have selected her own honored and happy home as the spot for her final exit. She left it, an invalid, in quest of health; and though she failed to find the thing she sought, and though God’s purpose permitted no return, still she did not, as we trust, fail to find that building of God, that house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens; yea, that far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, which Paul saw in the opening future.

and which the unchanging Word of God pledges to all the good of earth. Her death, though it makes a vacancy here, has but gathered another soul to its eternal home.

In bringing these observations to a close, let me say that my words, so far as I know, have been *true* words. I have endeavored to speak the simple truth, just as it lies before my mind. And if I have drawn the sketch of a character of very much more than common power and worth, the reason must be sought in the facts of the original. Mine is but an imperfect copy, borrowed from the materials of real life. It is something, yea, it is much, so to live in this world of temptation and danger, sin and error, that when one departs, such a record will be left behind him.

Let me specially suggest to those of my auditors who belong to the *female* sex, that the history now given of the deceased, is eminently worthy of their consideration.

Woman, I am quite aware, has her sphere in life, from which she cannot depart without damage to herself and detriment to society: in some respects, that sphere is different from, as well as subordinate to, that of man; yet to be a *good* woman, a thoroughly *sensible* woman, exerting in this world to a high degree the womanly power, is a task which, if well performed, will cover life with many jewels. Woman need not, in this Christian country, afflict herself with her social limitations. Let her do well and truly that which belongs to her: and she will find the amplest room for the best use of all her powers. Society will honor her; and God will honor her. Earth has a place for such women; and the service which they render to mankind, differs from that of those light, trifling, senseless, silly, and useless women, who think of nothing but display, who are mere passive appendages to the other sex, who treat themselves simply as parlor ornaments, who contribute nothing

to the material, the intellectual, or moral good of the world, and who, when they die, leave nothing behind them fit to grace and honor the memory of a woman sleeping in her grave. The character of the deceased furnishes a good lesson upon this subject. Her life shows what a woman may be, and what she may do, and that, too, without any violation of those delicate proprieties, which, while they guard her sex, are equally a large part of her social charm. I invite you, my female auditors, to study this subject. Life for you is a day of action, and of improvement and usefulness by action. You were not made simply to ornament society. You were not made to live an aimless life. God had higher purposes in your creation; and these you should seek to learn and fulfill. History records the actions of many noble women; and among this list every woman should seek to place her name. All the great moral motives which incite the other sex to effort and

to action, are as pertinent and powerful when addressed to woman. They call *her* as well as man. It will be her dignity and her glory to respond to them. One of the characteristics of a progressive Christian civilization, is always found in the increasing practical importance of woman. She rises with society as it advances, and becomes a ministering angel of good things on earth.

The general lesson of mortality taught by this providence, I trust we shall all pause to ponder and improve. From the circle of the living, from the warm attachments of earth, from circumstances of worldly competency and comfort, and by an appointment which baffled all human skill, the deceased was called from the scenes of time to those of eternity. In the programme of Providence her hour came, and her spirit fled. And thus it will be with us all. Our days are so numbered that we cannot pass the limit set in heaven. We see it not; no visible flaming sword of fate over-

hangs the final moment ; no living messenger stands there with his monitory voice ; and yet God's decree, unknown and unfelt till it assumes the form of fact, has fixed the moment when each one of my hearers will die. From this assembly there will be a next one, and after that a next one, and after this a third one, and so on, in a continuous series, till we shall all have passed into the silent realms of death. We surely cannot afford on trifling cares to waste that life which God's compassion spares. We shall soon have no life to waste. Loudly does this providence call upon us to do with our might whatsoever our hand findeth to do. I counsel you to hear the warning voice. Wait not till your last moments for your best impressions. Wait not till your last moments before you seek to make your peace with God. Far better will it be to discharge present duty, and by the merits of Christ gain that which death will refine, and eternal ages unfold.

III.

OBITUARY

APPEARING IN THE NEW YORK EVANGELIST,
OCTOBER 11, 1866.

DIED.

STRANAHAN.—On August 30th, in the village of Manchester, Vermont, Mrs. MARIAMNE F. STRANAHAN, wife of Hon. J. S. T. Stranahan, of Brooklyn, New York. For several months prior to her decease, Mrs. Stranahan had been an invalid; and early in the summer she left the City and went into the country, hoping thereby to recover her health. Though not reaping all the benefits from country air for which she had looked, still it was not until

the last week of her life, that either she or her friends had occasion to anticipate a fatal issue. Then her disease suddenly developed itself in a form of great violence; and after a few days of intense physical anguish, the struggle was ended, and her spirit fled to the God who gave it.

In the death of Mrs. Stranahan the City of Brooklyn has lost one of its most gifted, prominent, and influential women. She had been a resident of that City for some twenty-three years, and died in the fifty-fourth year of her age. She was a member of the South Presbyterian Church of Brooklyn, under the pastoral care of Rev. Dr. Spear, having joined the Church upon profession of her faith in the year 1855. Early trained by a pious parentage, and easily yielding her mind to the influences of religion, she had given clear indications of the Christian character long before she connected herself with the visible Church. Her piety was marked by a good

understanding of Bible doctrine, a firm faith in the teachings of God's Holy Word, a trustful hope in Jesus as the Saviour of sinners, and a very high degree of those practical virtues and philanthropies which Christianity both demands and inspires. She has left behind her very pleasing evidence that for her to die was gain.

Grace being added to the natural qualities of the deceased, she became one of the most efficient and useful of women in the labors of Christian love. For many years she had been the First Directress of the Graham Institute, an Institution founded to provide for the wants of respectable, aged, and indigent females. During the war she held a like position in the Woman's Relief Association of Brooklyn and Long Island, organized to co-operate with the United States Sanitary Commission in providing for the wants of the Army and Navy. Here her rare abilities made themselves obvious to all observers. Her du-

ties were arduous, sometimes very difficult; yet she was always equal to every occasion. No woman could have died in Brooklyn, whose death would be more universally and sincerely regretted. She died leaving behind her an exceedingly perfect record. Being so situated in life that she could devote much of her time to the service of others, she had the heart to do it. Her fine natural qualities were calculated to win for her many friends. Her strength of character, clearness of judgment, and great executive talent, made her the honored and trusted woman in many departments of social usefulness. Such a life, closing at last in a peaceful death, is fragrant with precious memories to comfort and instruct the living. Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord, for they rest from their labors, and their works do follow them. May God make this sore affliction a blessing to the family on which it falls with heaviest power.

IV.

EXTRACT

FROM THE REPORT OF THE SESSION OF THE
SOUTH PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF BROOK-
LYN, OCTOBER, 1866.

WHILE God, in his kind providence, has saved the people from the pestilence that wasteth at noon-day, and graciously preserved the health and lives of the congregation during the past year, He has nevertheless called away one of the members of this Church, to whom the Session feel constrained to make a brief reference.

Mrs. Marianne F. Stranahan, for eleven years a member of this Church, and for more

than twenty years a member of the congregation, died on the 30th of last August, in the village of Manchester, Vermont. In her death the Session feel that the Church and the city of Brooklyn have lost a woman of rare capacity and eminent usefulness. Having joined this Church in 1855, upon a profession of her faith, she has left behind her, in her Christian walk and conversation, pleasing evidence that for her to live was Christ, and to die was gain. At the time of her death, she was the First Directress of the Graham Institution, founded in this city to extend relief to respectable, aged, and indigent females.

The Woman's Relief Association of Brooklyn and Long Island, organized during the late war, selected Mrs. Stranahan for its presiding officer and executive head. In this sphere of philanthropic and patriotic labor, to which she devoted the best energies of her mind and body, she was found fully equal to all the duties and difficulties of her important

position. Seldom is woman called to bear so much public responsibility; most women would be inclined to shrink from the arduous task; yet our deceased sister, hearing the call of her country, and anxious to do for its defense all that woman could do, gave her powers to the service, with great honor to herself, and eminent satisfaction to the people. Generous and noble in her Christian feelings, kind and conciliating in her manners, practical and comprehensive in her judgment, energetic and persevering in action, she was peculiarly qualified to discharge the duties of the position to which she had been called. The whole community both marked and admired her as a woman of uncommon ability.

The Session feel that a life so useful, so practically Christian in its features, deserves a passing tribute at its close. They record their heart-felt sympathy with the afflicted family in this hour of their bereavement and sorrow, commending them to that comfort where-

with God comforteth His own people. The loss to the Church and to the community, is indeed great. May God make the affliction a blessing to the living, and lead us all so to live that for us to die will be gain.

V.
A C T I O N

OF THE

BOARD OF MANAGERS OF THE GRAHAM INSTITUTION.

MR. J. S. T. STRANAHAN :—

DEAR SIR :—

At the regular meeting of the Board of Managers of the Graham Institution, October 4th, 1866, the following paper was read and adopted :—

LADIES :—

Having parted but a few months ago for a brief season of rest and refreshment, we meet

again under peculiar circumstances, fraught with deep interest and unfeigned sorrow.

The death of our First Directress, Mrs. J. S. T. Stranahan, has caused a void in our Board that cannot be easily filled, casting a shadow of the deepest regret over all our transactions, filling our hearts with tenderest sympathies, and our thoughts also, with her many noble and attractive qualities.

Let us, whilst not questioning the Divine Will in this dispensation, reverently bow to its decree, acknowledging the great blessing it has vouchsafed this Institution in permitting it the benefits of many years of Mrs. Stranahan's life, consecrated to its cause with a dignified whole-souled devotion, rare as it was great.

The following Resolutions are offered for your acceptance:—

Resolved, In consideration of the inestimable worth of the late Mrs. Stranahan, and of her untiring devotion to the interests and advancement of this Institution, from its earliest

conception to its present prosperity; that we owe to her memory the highest honor and respect; and to her kind courtesy and earnest sympathy with those associated with her in its management, we give our heartfelt testimony, as also to the faithfulness of her official ministration, her wise counsel, and unshrinking judgment.

Resolved, That we offer our united sympathy to the family and friends of the deceased, in this season of their great affliction and bereavement; and may the only and great Comforter be their support and guide to that home to which she has gone, with all the promises of a glorious rest from her labors of love on earth.

Resolved, That this acknowledgment of the high estimation in which the eminent Christian virtues of the deceased were held by this Board of Managers, be placed upon the records of this Institution, and a copy of the same be sent to her surviving husband and family.

By order of the Board.

A. R. ST. JOHN,

Corresponding Secretary.

VI.
CORRESPONDENCE.

(1)

LETTER OF REV. HENRY W. BELLOWS, D. D.

NEW YORK, *October 22, 1866.*

REV. AND DEAR SIR:—

I learn with great satisfaction that you are preparing a Memoir of the late Mrs. Stranahan. Her death, during my summer vacation, brought me a sad surprise, with a painful regret that I could not join the many friends who deeply felt her loss, and must have gathered at her funeral.

Knowing Mrs. Stranahan only in her official character, as head of the noble band of women who through the war, by their admirable organization and efficient, patient working, made Brooklyn a shining example for all other Cities—I wonder that she should have left so deep a *personal* impression upon my heart; and that from a dozen interviews confined wholly to one subject, I should have conceived a friendship for her which it commonly takes a life of various intercourse and intimate or familiar relations to establish. And this is the more remarkable, because her directness, clearness of intention, and precision of purpose always kept her confined, in the conversations I held with her, to the special subject on which we met to take counsel. She had so admirably ordered an understanding, was so business-like and clear in her habits of mind, that not a minute was lost with her in beating the bush. With mild determination, and in a gentle distinctness of tone, she laid her views or wishes

before me, in a way that never needed any other explanation or enforcement than her simple statement carried with it. In few, precise, and transparent words, she made known her business, or gave her opinion, and wasted not a precious minute in generalities, or on matters aside from our common object. This rendered my official intercourse with her peculiarly satisfactory. She always knew just what she wanted to say, and left no uncertainty as to what she had said; and what she said, had always been so carefully considered, that her wishes were full of reason, and her advice full of persuasion. She seemed to me to unite the greatest discretion with the finest enthusiasm. As earnest, large, and noble in her views of what was due to the National cause, as the most zealous could be, she was yet so practical, judicious, and sober in her judgment, that what she planned, I learned to regard as certain of success. No one could see her presiding with mingled modesty and

dignity over one of the meetings of the Woman's Relief Association, without admiration for her self-possession, propriety of utterance, and skill in furthering the objects in view. I have always supposed that her wisdom, resolution, and perseverance, had a controlling influence in the glorious success of the Brooklyn Relief Association—the most marked and memorable fellowship of women, united from all sects and orders of Christians, in one practical enterprise, that the world ever saw.

I rejoice to lay this brief but sincere tribute of my respect upon the grave of this excellent and patriotic woman. I felt honored by her confidence and manifest friendship, and prized deeply the inestimable value of her services to a cause, which was for four years nearest of all to my heart. I shall look with eagerness for the Memoir of her life—expecting to find in it evidences of the depth and purity of the springs from which her beneficent course flowed. Meanwhile, per-

mit me to record my sympathy with the household, the church, and the community, that have lost her visible presence.

Respectfully yours,

HENRY W. BELLOWS.

REV. S. T. SPEAR, D. D.

(2)

LETTER OF REV. JAMES EELLS, D. D.

67 PIERREPONT STREET, BROOKLYN,)
October 11, 1866.)

REV. S. T. SPEAR, D. D. :—

MY DEAR SIR :—

It gives me pleasure to know that you are about to prepare a Memorial of respect for the character and life of the late Mrs. Stranahan. Both because of what she was, and what she did, she was eminently worthy of such a tribute, and none were more fully

aware of this than yourself, who was for so long a time her friend and Pastor.

As she was a native of the same town with myself, I might speak of her father's household, and her early life, and find much to commend in both, and not a little that was prophetic of her after history.

But a Memorial will have its chief interest from its reference to her later years, when her character had attained those very attractive features we so well remember, and her position and energy gave her, by common consent, the prominence which makes her loss a public, as well as social affliction.

Though she had been accepted as a leader among the ladies of Brooklyn for years before, it was not until the demands of the war were upon us, that she exhibited all her fitness to lead. But as we now recall the Great Fair in aid of the soldiers through the "Sanitary Commission," and the really wonderful work of the "Woman's Relief Associa-

tion," for years, we find the ever dignified, and devoted, and tireless Mrs. Stranahan, as the presiding spirit of that noble company of women, to be prominent in that review, of which Brooklyn will ever be proud. Prompt and wise in devising, efficient and resolute in executing, infusing her own spirit wherever there was any lack of enthusiasm or any weariness because of continued demands, she was no doubt the means of doing much to support those who wrought with her, and to complete a record, to which it was said the ladies of no other city furnished a parallel.

It is especially as thus seen that my memory restores our excellent friend, with whom my association was, for the most part, public or occasional. Yet I know that in the more private, and the domestic walks of life, she shone with no less beauty as a Christian wife, and mother, and friend.

All who knew her must regret that in her very prime she was removed from us,

leaving so wide a vacancy in the number of those to whom it is a joy to care for and sustain whatever is valuable and blessed. And all sympathize with that smaller circle, of which she was the center, now that so much of the light that cheered and charmed them, has ceased to shine. Yet none doubt that she is still active and still shines, in a nobler, better life.

Yours, very sincerely,

JAMES EELLS.

(3)

LETTER OF REV. MARK HOPKINS, D.D., LL.D.,
PRESIDENT OF WILLIAMS COLLEGE.

WILLIAMS COLLEGE, *October 13, 1866.*

REV. DR. SPEAR :—

MY DEAR SIR :—

My acquaintance with Mrs. Stranahan was but for a few weeks, while she was here

last summer with Mr. Stranahan, previous to the graduation of their son.

The note to which you refer, was in acknowledgment of a copy of the History of the great "Brooklyn and Long Island Sanitary Fair," which she sent me on leaving for Manchester; and as she seems to have valued it, I regret its loss. The purport of it was an expression of my appreciation of what had been done, and of those who had done it.

My impression of what had been accomplished by the people of Brooklyn and Long Island was, previously, altogether inadequate; and I was glad to know one who had been so efficient and honored a helper in that unprecedented work. It seemed to me that the representatives of such a work, and the leaders in it, were scarcely less deserving of public recognition and honor than our generals. I still think so, especially when they combine, as Mrs. Stranahan did so fully, such unusual quietness and delicacy with the com-

prehension and energy demanded by her position in that work. I have met with no one in whom that combination was more remarkable, and can only say, that so far as I had the pleasure of knowing Mrs. Stranahan, she seemed to me entirely and greatly worthy of esteem and honor. I rejoice that you are preparing a Memorial of her.

Respectfully yours,

MARK HOPKINS.

(4)

LETTER OF REV. FREDERICK A. FARLEY, D. D.

TO THE REV. DR. SPEAR :—

MY DEAR SIR :—

Your note of the 9th instant only finds me too glad to render my humble tribute to the memory of the late Mrs. Stranahan, though I may add nothing important to such a Memo-

rial as you, her Pastor and intimate personal friend, can prepare. My own acquaintance with her was chiefly in official relations; in which, however, it was impossible to be unimpressed by the fine powers she had at command, and so efficiently exercised for promoting the great and pressing interests to which she was pledged.

During the entire fourteen years of its existence, and holding the position of one of the chief permanent charities of the City, Mrs. Stranahan, as one of its Managers, and, previous to her death, for several years First Directress of the Brooklyn Society for the Relief of Respectable, Aged, Indigent Females, very largely contributed to the admirable administration of its affairs, and its consequent usefulness and reputation. Among so many intelligent and devoted women who were associated with her in that Board, it was a high, albeit a well-merited compliment, to be selected and continued from year to

year, through a long term, in that prominent office, by their unanimous and voluntary suffrages. The beneficiaries of this most excellent charity, many of whom from their education and previous social standing were fully capable of appreciating her, always regarded and spoke of her with marked attachment and respect. Her wise and careful supervision of the interests of the Institution; the courtesy and dignity with which she presided over the deliberations of its Managers; the sagacity with which she foresaw from time to time its needs, and the promptness and good judgment with which she set about providing for their supply; the quick sympathy she always manifested for the aged and the infirm of her own sex there brought beneath her care; and the large and generous Christian temper in which she recognized no division lines of sect or party in the apportionment of her regard, present to her late associates and her successor in office, an example worthy of all emula-

tion, and constitute a lasting claim on the gratitude of every lover and patron of this noble charity. During the long period of her service, in my frequent visits to the Institution, and intimate knowledge of its concerns, I have had but one impression of the ability and fidelity of its late First Directress.

In another sphere of action, where patriotism and benevolence united in a glorious and successful effort to relieve human suffering on the battle-field and in the camp, I have seen the same gifts and graces of this excellent woman more conspicuously called forth and illustrated. From the first organization of the Woman's Relief Association of the City of Brooklyn, in the second year of our Great Civil War to the collapse of the Rebellion which caused it, Mrs. Stranahan was the active, efficient, indefatigable, devoted President of that Association; an Association which was soon, by its marked "zeal, method, and persistency," three qualities warmly and justly

accredited to it by Dr. Bellows, destined to be claimed and officially recognized as the Brooklyn Auxiliary to that beneficent United States Sanitary Commission of which he was the head.

And really, my dear Sir, when I think of the amount of time, thought, anxious and pains-taking reflection, and active personal attention and effort she gave to this great work; when I recall how for nearly three years, with other weighty cares upon her, and amid failing health, she contrived to give herself so faithfully and devotedly to carrying it on, I am lost in admiration. True, here, as in the other case I have cited, she had for coadjutors a company of noble women, worthy representatives of our great and beautiful City. They represented every phase of our social and religious life; they were distinguished by all the various traits which are the growth of education and habit; they had on many subjects few views or associations in common.

In one thing, indeed, they were united—the desire to serve their country in her hour of peril, by ministering to the sufferings of her heroic defenders in the field. Acting on this thought—knowing no personal distinctions where this was the prevailing sentiment—and treating all with the like courtesy—she had yet the nice tact to call into requisition for special emergencies the precise talent which was wanted, and give it its right direction. Now and then—strange if it had not been so—there would be some questioning of her proposed measures, some demur to, or reluctance to accept, her suggestions; but among *men* the case would be found a rare one, where a presiding officer carried so largely and uniformly, from first to last, the concurrent judgment and approval of his compeers.

I shall always call her to mind as among the remarkable women whom I have had the good fortune to know. With no especial coveting of notoriety, she was—as one might say—in

the course of nature, or rather—as I prefer to say—in the order of the Divine Providence, called to occupy very responsible positions bearing largely on the public weal; and she was not found wanting. Nay, she was found eminently fit. All admitted it. And all find, now that she has been taken to her rest, that they owe her every grateful and honored remembrance.

I am, Dear Sir, ever

Yours, faithfully and respectfully,

FREDERICK A. FARLEY.

116 PACIFIC STREET, *October 15, 1866.*

(5)

LETTER OF REV. E. H. CANFIELD, D.D.

BROOKLYN, *October 30, 1866.*

REV. S. T. SPEAR, D.D. :—

REV. AND DEAR SIR :—

I was glad to learn from your note, that

x

you are preparing a Memorial of the late Mrs. Stranahan.

A character so marked, a life so useful, and an example in every way so worthy of imitation, ought to be held in cherished remembrance by all who were privileged to know her, and to be associated with her in works of faith and labors of love. No one could know her well, and fail to be impressed with her catholic spirit, her genuine Christian benevolence, her untiring energy, and her practical wisdom. These traits were forcibly illustrated in her numerous labors in behalf of some of the public charities of our City; but they were most strikingly exemplified in the remarkable executive efficiency and rare administrative talent, which she displayed, during the late rebellion, as President of the Woman's Relief Association of Brooklyn.

Without ostentation or forwardness, without exciting a suspicion that she desired to be prominent as a leader, she was instrumental

far beyond any other single person, in so harmonizing and combining the active sympathies and efforts of the people and various Christian bodies of this City, that in proportion to its population, Brooklyn stands peerless, in the substantial relief it afforded to our soldiers, in the camp, in the field, on the march, and in the hospital.

Her unusual talent in organizing and consolidating the various agencies that were employed, was fully matched by her skill in animating and directing them. Under the inspiration of her patriotic and Christian spirit, and under the guidance of her comprehensive judgment and great wisdom, the work went on, from year to year, not only with unflagging, but with constantly increasing interest and force, until the disbanding of our armies rendered it no longer needful.

With these extraordinary powers were blended, in a rare and happy combination, those qualities and graces which made her a

powerful center of attraction in her family, and in the social circle. Few have been so gifted and so privileged with opportunity as she; and very few have employed the talents committed to their trust so wisely and well.

Very truly, your Friend
and Brother in Christ,

E. H. CANFIELD.

(6)

LETTER OF REV. THEODORE L. CUYLER, D. D.

LAFAYETTE AVENUE CHURCH, *December 5, 1866.*

DEAR DR. SPEAR:—

I regret that I am not able to pay a more fitting tribute to the memory of that most admirable Christian woman, the late Mrs. Stranahan.

I saw her but seldom, and only in connec-

tion with those labors of philanthropy in which her warm heart delighted. Among the "honorable women not a few," who associated themselves with that grandest agency of National charity—the United States Sanitary Commission—the name of Mrs. Stranahan stands in well-deserved prominence. Her piety was Christ-like, for she "went about doing good."

A true woman might well covet such a reputation as our friend won and wore, more than the fame of brilliant authorship. She did her part for her country's salvation as faithfully as the sterner, stronger arms that wielded a sword on the field of conflict.

I recall now her pleasant, sunny countenance and her vivacious conversation—her untiring zeal and her sound practical sense; and I only wish that her example would find more imitators in the circles of refinement and high social influence. Blessed be her sainted memory! She resteth from her labors, and her *works* do follow her.

When you weave the chaplet which becomes such a noble woman's memory, let me add just this one simple leaf to the wreath. I wish it were more worthy.

With sincere regard, I remain

Yours in Christ Jesus,

THEO. L. CUYLER.

TO REV. S. T. SPEAR, D. D.

(7)

LETTER OF REV. R. S. STORRS, JR., D. D.

BROOKLYN, *December 24*, 1866.

REV. AND DEAR SIR:—

I am most happy, in response to your note, to give you my personal reminiscences of Mrs. Stranahan; and I only regret that the haste in which I am compelled to write, will make

my tribute to her memory more brief and less satisfactory than I wish it might be.

I had a slight, but a very pleasant acquaintance with her for several years, previously to the organization of the "Woman's Relief Association," which, if I remember correctly, was toward the close of 1862. But it was after that, and in connection especially with the operations of that Society,—of blessed memory!—that I saw her most frequently, and received my strongest impressions of her rare character and personal force.

Combined with entire modesty, dignity, and gentleness of manner, she had an extraordinary faculty of accomplishing whatever she undertook, by which no one who met her often, could fail to be impressed. I was so engrossed, at that time and afterward, with private as well as with public concerns, that it seemed sometimes wholly out of my power to give to the work for which she occasionally solicited my aid, the time and attention which

its importance deserved, and which, under less exacting circumstances, I should gladly have offered. But I very soon learned, that the negative answer which it always is difficult to give to a lady, especially when she comes as the advocate of a beneficent charity, was simply impossible when Mrs. Stranahan made the appeal.

My Study in the church is not remarkably easy of access, as some of my friends have had occasion to know. But she found always a way to reach me, if a meeting was approaching at which—in the absence perhaps of some one who had been expected—she wished me to speak; or if a movement was under discussion in regard to which she wished any suggestions from me. And it was really impossible to say “No,” in the face of so much quiet, intelligent, and persevering zeal as was manifest in her. The recollection of my refusal, if I ever had given it, would have caused me too much subsequent regret, to allow me

to turn to any thing else,—provided, of course, it had been at all within my power to render the service which she wished. I used to say, laughingly, after a while, in reply to the applications which sometimes came indirectly from her, and were not brought by herself in person: “Yes, if Mrs. Stranahan wishes it, I shall be there, of course! I always do what she desires. The notion of a clergyman’s possessing free-will, when the claims of her Society are concerned, is a delusion and a snare!” And when it was proposed to me to undertake the Editorship of the little Fair-paper, “*The Drum Beat*,” issued in connection with the Sanitary Fair, in the early part of 1864,—an office of more labor than would be imagined by those not familiar with such a work, and bringing a plentiful crop of criticisms for its chiefest external reward,—I accepted it as much out of deference to her wishes as for any other assignable reason.

Yet there was nothing whatever, as you

very well know, of unwomanly eagerness, positiveness, or determination to carry her points, in the character or the manner of Mrs. Stranahan. Hers was the force of an honest, earnest, decided nature, pervaded and emphasized by strong convictions, and thoroughly consecrated to the accomplishment of a great benevolent enterprise. The impression which she made, was not so much by what she said, as by the influence which emanated from her thoughtful, practical, and conscientious spirit. And I can well understand that this influence must have been, to a remarkable degree, a moulding and an educating element in the circles in which she habitually moved, and most of all in the inmost circle of her beloved and delightful home.

Others will speak, no doubt, of the unusual dignity and efficiency with which Mrs. Stranahan presided in the business meetings, or in the occasional more public meetings of that Association, of which she was so long the hon-

ored President; of the wisdom of her counsels; of the courage and faith which in the darkest hours of the cause of the Society, or of that of the Republic, she maintained, and earnestly manifested; and of the extent to which the success of the "Woman's Relief Association"—which constitutes one of the brightest features in our history as a City, and which became a source of inspiration to other associations of a similar nature throughout the North—was due to her. I have preferred to give you, in this hurried note, simply my personal recollection of the lady for whom so many mourn, and whose apparently too early removal from the societies she here adorned, has left in them so sudden and so great a void. Thank God, the influence of such an one outlasts her presence, and the memory of her usefulness becomes to others an animating power. Florence Nightingale inscribed on the headstone of the grave in which was buried the daughter of a noble English family, who had gone to

Scutari as soldiers' nurse: "She hath done what she could." A Divine eulogy, fitly applied! It might as properly be placed over the grave of Mrs. Stranahan. It will probably be long before another so signal opportunity is presented to a lady, in any of the Churches, to fill an office of so general importance, and do a work of such National relations. Whenever it shall be, I know nothing better to be desired—for the Churches, as an evidence of their educating power, or for the City, as a proof of its best civilization—than that another shall come forward, as unostentatiously as she did, capable of filling the office as wisely and well, and of conducting the work to as complete and noble a success.

I am, with great respect and regard,

Truly yours,

R. S. STORRS, JR.

(8)

LETTER OF REV. WILLIAM J. BUDDINGTON, D. D.

THE MEDITERRANEAN, *December 22, 1866.*

REV. S. T. SPEAR, D. D. :—

MY DEAR SIR :—

Your letter of the 11th of October, reached me at Alexandria; and I avail myself of the earliest opportunity to reply.

You were right in saying, that probably I had already heard of the death of Mrs. Stranahan. The intelligence reached me just as I was beginning my travels in the Holy Land. One of our Missionaries at Sidon gave us in leaving a copy of the “New York Evangelist,” which I began to read with avidity on horseback; and while riding along “the coasts of Tyre and Sidon,” my eyes

fell upon an obituary notice of Mrs. Stranahan. My wife was riding by my side; and it will be impossible to convey to you a sense of the surprise and grief we experienced. We had recently called upon her in her own beautiful home in Brooklyn, apparently in the fullness of matronly health and strength; and never more than then I thought her the radiating center of usefulness and happiness. But our grief was greater than our surprise. My wife wept for her as for a sister; and I who knew her less intimately, but not the less admiringly, felt as I have seldom felt, how much is taken out of this world, and lost to humanity, when such a Christian, so large-minded, so equable and full in development, is removed from the sphere of her labors.

That favorite charity of our City, "The Old Ladies' Home," has lost its main support and ornament. Who would fill her place? who could do it? Her large discre-

tion, her firmness combined with gentleness, her patience in details, her experience and general influence, were as much required, as they had been eminently useful and widely recognized.

But I had known Mrs. Stranahan chiefly, in common with the citizens of Brooklyn, as the head of the "Woman's Relief Association," and thus as the representative of the patriotism and Christian benevolence of the Ladies of Brooklyn, in that great crisis of our national history which drew forth all that was best in our countrymen and countrywomen, and nowhere more than in our own City. Most naturally — *inevitably*, I may say—she became the presiding officer of this most useful and efficient Association. Possessed naturally of a strong mind, clear in her perceptions, and logical in her courses of thought, she had, at the outset of the struggle, the most decided convictions of duty, and entered into the work of national

conservation with a heartiness and self-devotion, which, in a younger person, would have been called enthusiasm, but which in her case was only the measure of an enlightened Christianity and patriotism. She toiled untiringly, in season and out of season; when others flagged, she supplied the lack by giving more time, and redoubling her exertions; as the war wore wearily on, and disasters came, enfeebling some, and confounding others, she rose to sublimer efforts, and supplied the ranks of the true and faithful who gathered round her, with the proper watchwords and fresh resources. I both admired and wondered at her in this regard; and when success came, crowning the labors and sacrifices of our people, her soul was less filled with mere exultation than with sober thoughtfulness as to what still remained to be done.

There is beyond all this an inner history, which I do not feel competent to

describe. There were trials, struggles, and triumphs, of which but few knew any thing; there were jarring interests to be reconciled; there were prejudices to be propitiated, and sinister influences to be detected and counteracted. For all this, pre-eminent wisdom was needed, as well as charity and patience; and it is enough to say, that our deceased friend was equal to each emergency as it arose.

It was also no small addition to her many graces, and qualifications for the eminent post she filled, that she was able to preside at public meetings with a dignity, propriety, and efficiency, not to be surpassed; and when persons of the other sex were present, she did not vacate her office; but, although it many times cost her an effort, she went forward in the execution of the trust committed to her. Possibly, to one who saw her only on these occasions, she might have seemed masculine in her virtues;

but those who knew her, knew that it was simply a sense of duty which hardened her feminine softness into the manly strength which the occasion demanded.

Let me say in conclusion, that I regard Mrs. Stranahan as one of the most extraordinary of that galaxy of women, whom the night of our country's sorrow disclosed, and whose light will shine forever in the land they have done *their* part—I dare not say, how *great* a part—to save. I am glad that you are preparing a Memorial of her life. It is eminently fitting, that such a life should be known and remembered, that, being dead, she may yet *speak* for the Saviour she loved and the country she honored. I have written hastily, and, as I know, most inadequately; yet these are my honest impressions, and it is a pleasure to me to write them as you request.

Very truly yours,

WM. J. BUDDINGTON.

VII.

EXTRACT

FROM THE ANNUAL REPORT OF MRS. A. R.
ST. JOHN, CORRESPONDING SECRETARY OF
THE GRAHAM INSTITUTION, PRESENTED JAN-
UARY 31, 1867.

IN recording the death of the First Directress, Mrs. J. S. T. Stranahan, we are recording also one of the most grievous events of the past year. Her connection with the Institution was from its earliest commencement, and her position as First Directress, was held for the past ten years. How faithfully and energetically she labored

for its advancement and prosperity, the public at large will give their testimony; how devotedly and willingly she gave her time, her energy and strength to the comfort and well-being of its beneficiaries, her associates of the Board must fully attest.

Her character was an unusual one, combining the elements of true womanhood with great mental strength and decision of purpose—forming a character of rare executive ability. This was more conspicuously called forth in her interest for her country and its rights in the past national troubles; and her position at the head of the Woman's Relief Association, and its Sanitary Fair in aid of the great and holy cause, was filled with great ability, honor, and devotion.

Her remarkable "gift of speech" in addressing and holding the attention of an audience, as well as her dignity and quietude of address, gained a lasting memory in the hearts of her hearers, and an honorable niche

in the Temple of Fame, as one of the leading women of this country at a time when every woman as well as man was called upon for its support. Her inner life was one of deep thought—reflective, rather than communicative—which gave to her manner, at times, a seeming coldness or reserve which was not her characteristic in the more sacred circle of family or friendship.

All philanthropic objects met with her ready sympathy and earnest co-operation, and she was not called upon in vain to sustain them.

Her physical health, never strong, was very much affected by her great exertions at the Sanitary Fair, and gradually yielded to the fell destroyer of all human hopes and affections.

She more recently tried change of scene and air, but without much benefit, and finally sought the beautiful valley of Manchester, in the mountainous region of Vermont, which

proved to be her last resting-place on earth. Truly, at the foot of Mount Equinox, with its multitude of lesser peaks pointing heavenward, as if in welcome of her coming, was a fitting place for this truly noble woman to yield up her spirit to the power that gave it.

Respectfully submitted,

A. R. ST. JOHN,

Corresponding Secretary.

January 31, 1867.

VIII.

THE THIRD AND FINAL REPORT OF THE WOMAN'S RELIEF ASSOCIATION OF BROOKLYN AND LONG ISLAND.

THE necessity for the Woman's Relief Association terminated with the suppression of the rebellion and the consequent close of the war. At the final meeting of the Association, Mrs. Stranahan presented her last Report. From this Report the compiler has selected the following extracts, as specially deserving a place in this Memorial Volume:—

TO THE LOYAL WOMEN OF BROOKLYN AND LONG ISLAND:

Another year of service in the National cause has brought us to the close of the war. The Rebellion is utterly crushed,

the armies are disbanding, and Peace dwells once more in our land. Our work is ended therefore: the precious labor of love, which during long months and years of war has gone on so cheerfully—part of the great service of patriotic women far and near, of women grown more devoted and more self-sacrificing with every fresh appeal of sick and wounded soldiers, never doubting, always constant.

So suddenly has the long conflict ended, so abruptly has the need of our service ceased, that our Report concerns even now a thing of the past. A month ago supplies were pouring in upon us from every side, for the sick, the wounded, the convalescent—every thing that love could suggest, or skilful hands prepare: now our Depot has vanished, and a busy shop is in its place; the soldiers are marching home again through our streets, and the great Sanitary Commission itself is making ready its glorious Report to the American people.

We recall the spring of 1864, and the situation of our armies then, to realize once more how vast were the demands upon us only a year ago. Our own records show how constantly those demands were met, and how, through the wise husbanding of our resources, and the undiminished interest of our people, we were able to accomplish more than ever before, and this at the critical moment when other streams of supply had run low. Whatever may be said of the work of other communities in this great cause, we are confident in this, that nowhere have more enduring devotion and enthusiasm been shown to the very last. The Commission has never applied to us for supplies that we could not speedily furnish, and we have never appealed to the churches or the people in vain. Our requisitions have covered a wide range, and no provision has been accounted too careful or too comprehensive.

Upwards of 55,000 articles have been received and disposed of since the date of our last report, of an aggregate value exceeding \$100,000, the proper classification and packing of which has been a work of great magnitude.

The aggregate of our efforts, including the results of our Great Fair, represents a money-value of not less than *half a million of dollars*—a vast sum, viewed in the light of our first humble expectations, but, in a truer light, only a fitting expression of our mingled patriotism and philanthropy.

It only remains to us now, dear friends, to say a parting word, the thought of which alone fills our hearts with an unspeakable sadness. For nearly three years we have been united in the sweetest fellowship, which henceforth may only dwell in memory. How much we owe to your kindness we cannot express. Our work has been possible only through your constant sympathy, your unwavering confidence in us, your patience with our failings, your unfailing readiness to serve in the great cause. We thank you, whether present or absent, from our inmost hearts. The work has been yours—not ours; you have been the great givers—and we but the almoners of your love. And with these words of ours, the last that may ever reach you, we would tell you how the blessing of the good Father has gone with your every gift, even the humblest; so that nothing has failed to serve a greater good than your fond hearts ever planned. Could you know the precious service of even the poor wrappings of your treasures—the coarse paper, the rough boxes, the shavings, the bran—as we could tell it to you, your satisfaction would ask no more. Thousands of brave men sleep to-day in patriot graves whose closing hours of life your goodness made serene and happy with thoughts of mother, sister, wife, in dis-

tant homes. Thousands more are in your midst to-day, safely returned from the war, whose lives were saved, through your far-reaching care, on battle-fields, in army hospitals, and dreadful prisons.

Your labor has not been in vain: you too have helped to save your country, and make her free forever. This is your true reward—better than words of ours can utter.

And so we take our parting, kind friends, and say our last farewell. May the blessings of the great multitude of those that were ready to perish return to your own hearts and homes, to dwell there evermore, and bring you peace.

MRS. J. S. T. STRANAHAN,

President.

BROOKLYN. *August 1, 1865.*

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